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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: Text of Letter from Zimbabwe Opposition Leader to President Bush

REF: Fax to AF/S

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Not for Internet posting.

1. (SBU) On June 19, the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) delivered to all G-8 embassies in Harare a letter from its president, Morgan Tsvangirai, to their respective heads of government. Below is the verbatim text of the letter addressed to President Bush. A copy of the original is being faxed to AF/S (ref).

2. (SBU) Begin Text:

Mr. George W. Bush  
President of the United States of America

Dear Mr. President,

I write to you on the eve of the historic Group of 8 Most Industrialised Countries/New Partnership for African Development (G8/NEPAD) summit in Canada. I would have welcomed an opportunity for direct consultations with you on various matters of mutual interest, but as you may be aware, I am currently prohibited to travel outside Zimbabwe.

Over the past forty years or more, the story of Africa has been one of utmost dejection, hopelessness and despair, with grinding poverty seemingly defeating all possibilities for relief and redress. Tragically, the African experience is replete with elaborate development strategies, programmes of action etc., but all followed by a dismal record of inaction and painful failure. Lack of capacity, lack of political will, lack of resources, endemic corruption and bad governance accounted for this routine and systematic failure. The cost, in terms of missed opportunities and indeed human life has been astronomical.

However, a fortuitous convergence of circumstances, both within and outside the continent seems to have, at long last, created a rare, unprecedented and unique opportunity for a serious search for renewal, for a new beginning. NEPAD brings a message of hope to the African continent. In the words of one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century, albeit, in a slightly different context, for us NEPAD, if successfully implemented represents a vast cooperative effort, unparalleled in magnitude and nobility of purpose to satisfy the burning needs of the African people for economic progress, freedom from hunger and disease, from dictatorship and despair. It will stand tall as a shining tribute to the power of the creative energies of free men and women - an example to the entire world that liberty and progress can walk hand in hand. It will engender a new spirit of enterprise that will create a brave new continent where poverty, disease and ignorance will have no place. NEPAD must not be allowed to remain at the level of appearances and unfulfilled hopes and promises.

It is in this context that we in the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) welcome the NEPAD initiative. Here in Zimbabwe, in our own small-localized way, we have been struggling, against perilous odds, guided by the ideals of good governance, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and sustainable economic management and development. The same ideals that are enshrined in, and underpin NEPAD.

You will no doubt, agree with us, that in spite of the generally hostile political terrain, the culture of democratic governance is taking root in a number of African countries, with brave voices of agony being heard across the globe from a people who refuse to continue to succumb to dictatorship and decay. We believe that NEPAD should play a critical role in strengthening these desperate voices. NEPAD should ensure that disease, poverty and ignorance would provide neither a breeding ground for, nor offer opportunities for regression into autocratic forms of governance and economic decay.

However, we equally and strongly believe that Africa cannot meaningfully engage the international community without first tackling problems that threaten both regional and

continental security and political stability. There is or ought to be a direct linkage. The litmus test lies in Africans ending rhetoric and taking tangible action to help resolve thorny issues in accordance with standards of conduct and performance that they have set for themselves. They should be judged by the standards that they have voluntarily designed and accepted. NEPAD provides such a set of standards.

ZANU PF and the Mugabe regime are intensifying a programme of systematic violence to punish the MDC and civic organisations and compel them to accept the results of the March 2002 fraudulent presidential poll results. All the material facts on the ground in Zimbabwe today indicate that the Mugabe regime is putting finishing touches to preparations for a stage-managed serious domestic conflict that would see the death of thousands of innocent civilians.

We in the MDC stand ready for constructive dialogue that would lead to a peaceful resolution of the crisis facing our country today, but Mugabe and his associates are bent on a destructive path that can only degenerate into a serious internal conflict verging on civil war. As Mugabe totters towards the sunset of his biological and political life, he seems determined to take Zimbabwe down with him.

Zimbabwe remains NEPAD's biggest challenge. It will test the sincerity and commitment of Africa's leaders to the concept of "peer review". It is tragically naive in the extreme to expect dictators to reform and change out of "self-interest" alone as alluded to by the President of South Africa. If this were the case, there would have been no Zimbabwe crisis since self-interest would have impelled Mugabe to disembark from his ruinous course of action. Peer pressure must translate into a real cost for the maintenance of autocratic forms of government. It must be seen to real and effective. Dictators such as Robert Mugabe do not care about the general welfare of those that they rule and oppress. Instead, an impoverished and hopeless people precisely offer the kind of environment in which dictators like Robert Mugabe thrive. That is the real "self-interest" of Robert Mugabe. He cannot be expected to reform himself out of a dictatorship, which he deliberately constructed and constantly nourishes.

In the context of SADC it appears that so far there has not been any intention to take peer review seriously. As you are aware, the SADC Parliamentary Forum produced the "Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region" which was adopted by all SADC states, including Zimbabwe and South Africa, (which is one of the key movers of NEPAD) in March 2001. None of the Election Observer Missions from the SADC countries and Nigeria in particular and the African continent in general adhered to these norms and standards in their monitoring and evaluation of the Zimbabwe presidential poll. The SADC Parliamentary Forum proceeded to use these supposedly agreed standards to monitor the Zimbabwe presidential polls in March 2002 and produced a damning report on the Zimbabwe presidential poll, while country Election Observer Missions produced ringing endorsements of what was clearly a rigged and violent poll. It is poignant to note that Election Observer Missions from South Africa and Nigeria, whose presidents are positioning themselves as some of the peer review leaders, either totally ignored or were openly contemptuous of the SADC Parliamentary Norms and Standards. This was a tragic failure to apply peer pressure on the Mugabe regime to abandon a systematic programme of violence in order to steal the presidential poll and we have absolutely no confidence in the renewed claim by African leaders that this time round, in the context of NEPAD peer review and pressure would be effective. In the absence of any redeeming action on the part of South Africa and Nigeria, it is difficult to regard this renewed commitment to peer pressure as anything but a ruse to get NEPAD off the launching pad. The leaders of South Africa and Nigeria must be honest with themselves, with Zimbabwe and with the international commitment. If they are reluctant to apply meaningful peer pressure on Mugabe, what guarantee does the international community have that any other murderous African dictator would be treated differently? Statesmen do not say one thing and proceed to do something totally different.

We suggest that as a mark of seriousness and good faith, South Africa and Nigeria, the two key players in NEPAD with the most real leverage on Mugabe, should become more assertive and encourage Mugabe to return to the negotiating table. The G8 and other international friends and well wishers of Zimbabwe can also offer an effective positive hand. They should make it clear that the progress of NEPAD would be problematic unless peer pressure on the Mugabe regime is seen to be producing positive results.

NEPAD should not offer succor and comfort to dictatorial regimes that are precisely the root cause of Africa's present predicament. The present Government of Zimbabwe

constitutes a serious threat to the central tenets of NEPAD. Peer pressure does not seem to have been applied seriously on the Mugabe regime. Since 2001, many regional and continental missions have been to Zimbabwe, but not one of them has successfully pressurized Mugabe to abandon his naked abuse of power and his total disregard and utter contempt for internationally accepted norms of democracy and good governance. Indeed some of these missions, such as the SADC Ministerial Task Force, which met in Harare in September 2001 openly, supported Mugabe's reckless and violent ways. Periodic summits of the SADC Heads of State have routinely delivered messages of support for Mugabe's dictatorship; the present Chairman of SADC, Malawian President Bakili Muluzi has announced his firm intention to reverse the march and gains of democracy in his impoverished and starving country; and Zambia's presidential poll result remains controversial and contested. Clearly, by its own record, SADC does not constitute a peer group that inspires confidence. So far it does not have a demonstrable ability and track record of monitoring democracy and good governance in the region. SADC in general and South Africa in particular must create a new set of bona fides to show that they are a serious regional peer review group. Zimbabwe must be a starting point.

I avail myself, Mr. President, this opportunity to renew the assurances of my highest consideration.

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,

Morgan Tsvangirai,  
President Movement for Democratic Change

End Text.

Sullivan